GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS

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General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

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NOTE TO TEACHERS: The next issue of the Geographic News Bulletin will be published upon the reopening of schools in October. The Bulletin is not issued during the summer vacation months. It will facilitate the handling and prompt mailing of the Bulletin in the fall if teachers whose subscriptions expire with this issue will apply now for the Bulletins they need for next year.

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"DRAWING" SLIVERS IN A COTTON MILL

(See Bulletin No. 2).

HOW TO OBTAIN THE BULLETINS

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The World's Most Hair-Raising Kiss

WHAT is the most famous stone in the world?

Many patriotic Americans will advance the claims of Plymouth Rock. Englishmen will no doubt insist that it is the Stone of Scone, on which their kings are crowned, and on which tradition says Jacob pillowed his head. Scientists and scholars will vote for the Rosetta Stone, whose parallel columns of inscriptions unlocked the rich records of ancient Egypt. Moslems will stand by the black stone, in the Ka-aba at Mecca.

But importance and fame are not necessarily the same. The man in the street will probably carry the vote overwhelmingly for the stone that is so well known that it has created a noun, an adjective, and a verb in the English language: the Blarney Stone.

True Seeker Must Hang Head Down

The owner of the Blarney Stone—and, incidentally, of Blarney Castle and Blarney estate—Sir George Colthurst, died a few months ago, and the property has passed to his son of the same name.

Blarney—village, castle and stone—is geographically near the city of Cork. But when one notices the haste of tourists to push on to the castle he is tempted to turn the relationship about and consider Cork as merely the handy vestibule to the romantically famous stone. The traveler bound for Blarney journeys five miles northwest from Cork, then one hundred and twenty-five feet up winding stone stairs to the top of the massive castle tower. In order to kiss the bit of rock a person must hang head down, someone holding on to his legs, with nothing between him and the ground but a few feathery, impotent tree-tops—far below. This is probably the world's most hair-raising and goose-flesh-producing kiss.

Blarney Castle was built in the fifteenth century as a great family fortress, that of the MacCarthys, chieftains of Munster. Homes had to withstand sieges in those days, and the tower of Blarney was built to be siege-proof. The walls are eighteen feet thick in places, and the stairway rises between the outer and inner faces. At the top is an overhanging cornice with open spaces in the floor outside the main tower walls. Through these openings the defenders poured hot cinders, burning oil, molten lead, stones, and other discouraging missiles on besiegers who came too close. It is through one of these loop-holes that he who would kiss the Blarney Stone must be lowered.

When "Blarney" Held Back the English

The stone itself is one of the rectangular building blocks of which the tower is constructed and lies in the outer wall just below the overhanging structure. A noticeable depression has been worn in it by the hundreds of thousands of lips that have been pressed against it since the odd legend in regard to it arose. The legend, so potent that it has worn down the old tower steps and has turned countless visitors upside down, is that he who kisses the stone will be endowed with flowing eloquence—will receive "the gift of blarney."

The origin of the legend is a subject of dispute. One version has it that a MacCarthy, invested by an overwhelming English force, successfully put the

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ACQUIRING THE "GIFT O'GAB"

The celebrated Blarney Stone was, according to legend, endowed by a witch with the power of imparting to any one who kissed it a fluent and persuasive tongue. Iron braces support it in the wall of the tower of Castle Blarney, near Cork, Ireland. Though the feat of kissing it is difficult, the stone is worn and polished by thousands of lips (see Bulletin No. 1).

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King Cotton

CONSIDER His Majesty Gossypium Hirsutum, otherwise known as King Cotton. His domain is the world but his chief capital is the southern tier of the United States.

Night and day the average man seldom escapes the rule of King Cotton. He sleeps between cotton sheets on a mattress stuffed with fluffy white fibers. After he discards his cotton pajamas and takes his morning bath he uses a Turkish towel made of cotton; he dons cotton underclothes; and if it is summer, he probably wears outer garments at least partly made of cotton. The celluloid comb and brush which he uses in making his toilet, and even the handle of his tooth brush are probably made from the same necessary fiber.

Breakfast is not entirely cottonless even though the table is spread with linen. If margarin is used instead of butter it is probably made largely from cotton-seed oil; while the same oil or solid shortening made from it may be used in griddle cakes, biscuits or muffins. The morning paper, too, which Mr. Average Man thumbs through is dependent on cotton for the film from which its photographs were made.

We Meet King Cotton at Every Turn

If he motors to town, he rides on tires that could not be made so cheap and strong and durable except for their "carcasses" of cotton fabric or cords. Probably the upholstery, the brake-linings, and even the lacquer finish on his car have drawn upon cotton as raw materials. Arrived at his office he makes use of cotton in some of his stationery, his telephone insulation, his typewriter ribbons, his window cords, his shades, and probably in numerous other ways.

At luncheon Mr. Average Man doubtless eats from a table covered with cotton and uses a cotton napkin, for most restaurants and hotels use cotton "table linen." More than likely the roast of his evening meal is from an animal fattened in part on cotton-seed meal. If he goes to the "movies" in the evening he is patronizing a huge industry into whose miles of photographic film cotton enters as the chief raw material. The seat covers, the hangings, and even the screen on which the story he has come to see unfolded owe their allegiance to King Cotton.

Mrs. Average Woman relies even more on Gossypium Hirsutum. The shelves of her linen closet are stacked high with white cotton goods used in bed and bath rooms. In her clothes closets hang dress after dress of the same material. Her dresser drawers are filled with cotton garments. Her dishes are dried by cotton dish cloths. Her laundry (itself largely cotton) hangs on cotton lines. She darns and mends with cotton thread, and retires for the night to sleep in and between and upon cotton.

How a Billion Dollar Crop Is Planted

From where does this indispensable cotton come?

Most of it from American cotton fields of the South and Southwest.

Just now the first little blooms which mean so much to market exchanges and commerce in the summer and fall are appearing in southern Texas. Each week, as the sun gets warmer, sees the white army advance farther north until it stands in possession of close to 40 million acres of the South. This is equivalent to 62,500 square miles. If it were a single field it would be large enough to cover every square foot of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, and most of Connecticut.

The plants which will supply the great American cotton crop of 1926 ("great" because even in poor years American cotton is seldom worth less than a billion dollars) are growing in rows 3 to 4 feet apart. They are planted rather thickly; but when they are several inches tall the farmers and their laborers go along the rows with hoes chopping out surplus seedlings, and incidentally, weeds and grass, leaving the plants from 12 to 18 inches apart.

Cotton-Picking Time Is Holiday Time

After this most of the cultivation is given with broad shallow plows and riding cultivators. Under the warmth of the Southern spring and summer the plants grow rapidly. When they reach maturity each is virtually a sturdy little tree three to four feet high,

English leader off month after month. Each time he offered a new and plausible "Blarney" excuse for a delay in surrendering the stronghold. Legends, too, have grown up about the origin of the stone. One asserts that it was brought to Ireland by Phoenician colonists, and had previously been a "mighty talisman" in both Syria and Carthage.

Because kissing the Blarney Stone is such a hair-raising experience, many who climb the narrow stairway to the top of the tower do not perform the rite, but their climb is not wholly in vain. From the tower one sees spread out miles of as lovely and peaceful a section of Ireland as is to be found: rolling hills; tiny, sparkling lakes; green woodlands; and here and there a quaint thatch-roofed cottage.

Townsmen Weave Tweed Instead of Words

There have been inroads into the groves of Blarney, but the shady estate is beautiful yet. Near the entrance gates is a tea-house where the inevitable refreshments and souvenir post-cards are sold. Blarney village, alongside the estate, has a population of about 1,000 souls. The inhabitants have not capitalized their supposed opportunities and become a community of orators. They follow the matter-of-fact industry of weaving tweed.

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COTTON ON THE WAY TO MARKET

The South sends to India to get another fiber, jute, to bind the bales of cotton which she sends to market. Burlap and potato-sacking are also jute, but the jute material used to bind cotton is far heavier and stronger (see Bulletin No. 2).

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Brukkaros, Southwest Africa, Wins Selection as Outpost of Science

BRUKKAROS, a Hottentot reservation on a plateau of Southwest Africa, has been definitely selected, after a search of the dry regions of the Old World, to be an Eastern Hemisphere station for solar radiation study.

Brukkaros was found to be superior to Quetta, Baluchistan, which was a runner-up in this unusual climate contest. Quetta was described in Bulletin No. 1, April 5. The African site for an outpost of science was judged best by Dr. Charles G. Abbot, head of the National Geographic Society Solar Radiation Expedition in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution.

A Weather Report in Numbers

From Brukkaros the cables will be carrying soon a daily message which will read something like this: "1.913."

It is a code—but there is nothing especially secret about it—it is merely the daily "weather report."

It means that the sun's radiation on the day in question was 1.913 calories per square centimeter per minute.

A "calorie" is the "horsepower" unit of heat measurement and therefore of solar radiation. One calorie is the amount of energy required to raise one cubic centimeter of water one degree.

By the daily measurement of this solar constant, variations over a period of years may be noted. These variations may hold the key to future long range weather forecasting.

Brukkaros lies about 200 miles from the Atlantic Ocean in Southwest Africa and about 500 miles almost due north of Cape Town. It is near the railway which runs north and south in the uplands of Southwest Africa and less than 100 miles from the junction of that line with the east and west line which connects with the coast at the port of Luderitz. Two hundred and fifty miles to the north is Windhuk, capital of Southwest Africa.

No Question About Dryness of Southwest Africa

A sun observatory requires a dry climate where the sun will seldom be obscured by clouds. One has only to sail along the coast of Southwest Africa, especially toward the south, to realize that here is a land little visited by moisture. The country puts its worst foot—the coastal desert—forward toward the Atlantic. This coastal strip is known as "the Namib." Few coast regions of the earth are more desolate.

Shallow water, low desert islands, absence of harbors, and a dry, sandy shore, devoid of vegetation, combined to make the region so inhospitable to seamen that for centuries they gave it a wide berth. The sand, mostly blown into dunes, extends inland from ten to forty miles, and the barren, desert character of this strip is marked from the southern boundary for about 600 miles north. The few stream beds that have been worn into the Namib during the ages have water in them only now and then over a long series of years. When rain does flow down from the highlands, it seldom reaches the sea.

The northern two hundred miles of the coast region is only a little less desolate than the Namib. It is more mountainous, less ruled by loose sand, and

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its branches touching those of its neighbors in its row and almost meeting the branches from plants in rows on either side.

The blooms are beautiful snow-white blossoms at first, then change through pink to red. They never fade, but the red petals fall, leaving at their bases little green "squares" in the center of which nestle the green "bolls" about the size of a finger end. These swell steadily through the warm summer weeks until they are the size of an egg, when they are tinged with reddish brown. They then crack open along five lines and expose in each orangelike segment a closely packed, moist, white substance. In a few days the segments have folded back, the moisture has evaporated, and a ball of fluffy white cotton rests in its saucer. If left unpicked too long the cotton hangs downward from the open bolls—now dry and brown—like snowy moss.

Cotton-picking time is as much a Nature-marked season in the South as is the overflow of the Nile in Egypt or the appearance of the summer sun in the Arctic. The work appeals to the Southern negro. Industries lose their employees, housewives their maids, when the late summer exodus to the cotton fields begins. Many of the pickers camp out for weeks near the fields in which they work and look upon the outing as a sort of holiday. Even children and aged persons take part in the work, dragging their canvas sacks behind them.

Dressing Up Cotton to Go to Market

A generation ago pickers received 40 to 50 cents for each hundred pounds picked, but the pay has increased greatly in recent years. Last year pickers received $1.25, $1.50 and even $1.75 a hundred in some regions. The average worker picks about 200 pounds a day, but experts pick 500 pounds or more.

Approximately two-thirds by weight of "seed cotton"—the cotton as it comes from the bolls—is seed, one-third lint or fiber. The latter adheres tightly to the seed, growing out from all parts of it in tiny white hairs. To separate lint from seed the seed cotton must be passed through a "gin." The pickers have their sacks weighed when they have picked down a row and back, and dump the cotton in great, deep bedded farm wagons. When 1,500 pounds or more of this has accumulated it is hauled to the gin, usually located at a nearby town.

There a movable suction pipe sucks up the still intimately mixed seed and lint to an upper floor where it falls into a hopper and starts on its journey through the whirring, humming machinery whose development made possible the great cotton industry. Numerous whirling saws tear the fiber from the seeds. The latter drop into chutes which carry them to huge gray-green piles in the seed room. The lint passes on belt conveyors in a broad endless stream to the presses where it is squeezed into bales weighing approximately 500 pounds. These bales are covered with very coarse brown jute bagging and bound with iron bands. It is in such bales or in bales still further compressed that cotton moves to American cotton mills and across the oceans to the mills of Europe and Japan.

The Now Valuable Seed Which Was Once Thrown Away

Until after the Civil War the value of cotton seed was not recognized. Millions of tons were burnt, thrown aside to rot, or shoveled into rivers. Now the seed from between three and four bales of cotton is worth as much as a bale of the fiber. The seed is passed through a super-gin to remove the short lint known as "linters." This is valuable for dozens of uses, from making gun cotton and mattresses to surgical dressings and photographic films. The brownish-green seeds are then hulled and the kernels are pressed between camels-hair pads which hold the golden yellow meal and express the oil. Even the hulls make good cattle feed, while the meal and oil furnish bases for a growing number of valuable products.

The United States is the world's greatest cotton producer, furnishing more than half of the total crop, usually from 10 million to 16 million bales. A single State, Texas, produces about one-third of the American crop, or about one-sixth of the world crop.

Bulletin No. 2, Mary 17, 1926.

For Further Reading

Teachers who wish to use this bulletin for project or reading assignment will find allied subject matter and illustrations in the following National Geographic Magazine articles: "Massachusetts—Beehive of Industry." By William Joseph Showalter. March, 1920, 41 illustrations, pp. 203–245. "The Land of Egypt." By Alfred Pearce Dennis. March, 1926, 29 illustrations, pp. 271–298.

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French Somaliland, Focus of New Colonial Activities

FRENCH SOMALILAND, opposite Aden, has suddenly become the focus point of new colonial activity which is making Europe uneasy.

Like Gibraltar, French Somaliland is a small domain, but in a vital place.

Joint effort of man and Nature has made the connecting waters of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea virtually a 3,500-mile canal from Gibraltar to the Gulf of Aden, the door to the Orient. That canal contracts at three places, Gibraltar, Suez, and Aden. That makes six vital points of land control. Of these England owns four; both banks of the Suez Canal, Gibraltar and Aden. Spain at Ceuta claims Gibraltar's twin. The sixth prize is French Somaliland, opposite Aden.

Mussolini, by virtue of recent agreement with England, would throw a railroad line around French Somaliland in order to connect Italian Somaliland and Eritrea. The former borders Abyssinia on the southeast and the latter is a coastal strip on the northeast.

A Remnant of a French Dream

French Somaliland is a small reality which France has held to in northeastern Africa after the collapse of a dream of empire. That dream was shattered when the famous Fashoda incident occurred. French troops camped at Fashoda on the Upper Nile in 1898. They planned cooperation with Abyssinia in flinging the band of French territory all the way across northern Africa. But the appearance of Kitchener's forces discouraged the idea, so the French expedition passed on to Somaliland, leaving Sudan to undisputed British control.

A glance at the map shows the strategic value of the colony. Its coast forms one shore of the Strait of Bab el Mandeb, the gateway to the Red Sea. Jibuti, which in 1896, superseded Obok as the capital and chief city, is a French Aden, and is situated directly across the Gulf of Aden and about 150 miles from that important British station.

Port for "Imperial Ethiopian Railway"

French Somaliland's great economic importance, however, arises from the fact that Jibuti is the salt water terminus of the only railway which taps the riches of Abyssinia. Started in 1896, the line was incomplete for many years, extending only a relatively short distance into Abyssinia. It was pushed to completion during the World War, reaching Addis Ababa, capital of Abyssinia. Trade passing through Jibuti jumped with the establishment of this steel highway, and in 1918 reached $20,000,000.

The country traversed by the "Imperial Ethiopian Railway" is still inhabited by rather wild and unruly tribes. Its trains are operated only in the day time. When the first locomotive ran over the line the ignorant natives thought it a sort of super-lion. Rushing in its path, they threw spears against its steel front and sides. The loss of legs and arms taught them that the new "beast" was invulnerable to their weapons, but they still harbor a keen resentment against the railway and its trains. The railway exists largely for political reasons and was built at a tremendous cost. Before the World War the passenger fare was about 25 cents a mile. The increase of business, however, puts

lies in a more tropical latitude. The stream beds are better defined and usually support a growth of bushes and trees.

The Magic of Rain in a Desert

Perhaps once in ten years the Namib receives a drenching rain and demonstrates the magic that Nature hides in her drops of water. Verdure springs up all over the parched sands, animals flock in almost over night, and for a while the former desert teems with game. Soon, however, the sun parches the soil again, the animals disappear, and once more the desert is supreme.

From ten to forty miles inland the desert gives place to a transition belt. Sparse grass and bushes appear on rising ground and afford some pasturage. Immediately beyond is the escarpment of the inland plateau, its edge marked in many places by fantastically piled boulders.

It is in the upland back of the sandy coastal strip that the worth while part of Southwest Africa exists. This region is least promising in the south where the rainfall is scant. But even there, the broad valley of the Fish River and the valleys of its tributaries furnish regions in which thriving communities have sprung up. Much of the drier land supports flocks of sheep and goats. It is near the Fish River Valley that the observatory will be placed.

German First Owner of Hottentot Land

Before the World War Southwest Africa was a German colony known as "German Southwest Africa." Germany came into possession of Southwest Africa following the founding of a trading post by a German merchant, Luderitz, at what was then Angra Pequena Bay on the southern coast of the territory. Luderitz bought the site of his town from the Hottentots.

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THE BEACON ON THE SITE OF DIAZ PILLAR, LUDERITZ BAY, SOUTHWEST AFRICA

In 1847 Bartholomeu Diaz, the Portuguese explorer who first rounded the Cape of Good Hope, erected a pillar on this point of land in Luderitz Bay. At present a fog-signal station is located there, and the picture shows a steam boiler being hauled up to it. The new solar-radiation observatory sponsored by the National Geographic Society will be located some miles inland from this coast.

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Japan's Thousand Islands Suffer Storm

A JAPANESE destroyer has been dispatched to the Kurile Islands to carry aid to storm sufferers. The Kurile Islands were in the path of a severe gale which took the lives of a hundred fishermen.

It will be remembered that the Kuriles were the first foreign territory which the American round-the-world fliers reached after leaving the Aleutians.

Applying a little imagination to the world map, one might fancy the chains of islands that stretch from Alaska to Asia and down that continent's east coast to be a continuous gigantic popcorn string like those hung on Christmas trees. Attached to one "limb" at Alaska the string is festooned across to a Kamchatkan "twig," and is then allowed to make a second graceful loop to another anchor point in northern Japan. This second festoon—almost a perfect arc—is the Kurile chain.

"Kurile" Means "to Smoke," and They Do

Shimushu, the northernmost of the Kuriles, differs from all its fellows in not being mountainous. It is a small island, not more than ten miles in length and perhaps seven miles wide, made up of undulating hills and swampy valleys covered with grasses and scrub trees.

Five miles farther south lies Paramushiri, second largest of the islands. This island is roughly 50 miles long by ten wide and is a striking contrast to the first Kurile to be encountered. It is thickly studded with mountains, some of them nearly 7,000 feet high, one of them an active volcano from which steam is ever rising. Streams furrow this island, and in season salmon are numerous. Some fishermen and canners journey to Paramushiri in the fishing season, but only a handful of guards reside on the island permanently.

"Kurile" is derived from a Russian word meaning "to smoke." The Japanese for the Kuriles is "Chisima" or "Tsi-Sima," meaning thousand islands.

Yetorofu is the largest and most valuable of the Kuriles. This island is more than 100 miles long and about 15 miles wide. It is close to the southern end of the group where Nature's kindlier mood is indicated by dense forests and the permanent settlements. About 1,500 people reside on the island and it is divided into four government provinces.

Fogs, Gales and Treacherous Currents

The Kuriles on the whole are unpleasant places for the mariners. There are many half sunken rocks off shore while treacherous currents flow between the islands with each flood and ebb tide. Fogs are frequent and gales may blow at any season.

When Russian adventurers reached Kamchatka early in the 18th century they pushed down into the Kuriles in search of furs, much as they later worked their way eastward along the Aleutians. When the Japanese began to take an interest in the world outside their principal islands they found the northern part of the Kuriles under Russian control. The same thing had happened in Sakhalin, a much more valuable territory. In 1875 Japan was induced by Russia to trade her rights in Sakhalin for Russian rights in the Kuriles.

Bulletin No. 5, May 17, 1926.

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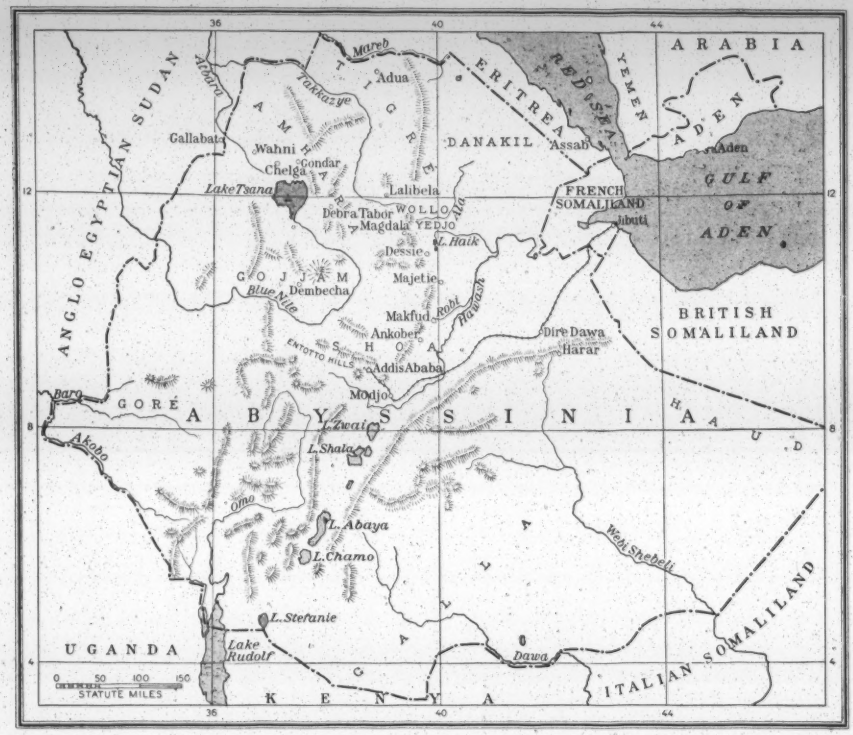
a different economic aspect on the project. The products brought out of Abyssinia consist in the main of coffee, ivory, hides and skins.

It took imagination and the ability to look far into the back country and into the future to see any economic value in French Somaliland at the time France began her acquisitions there. The coast and a coastal strip of considerable width is one of the most desolate regions imaginable. It is sand and volcanic rock, with here and there patches of low scrub. Some five miles inland from the tip of the Gulf of Tajura is Lake Assal, Somaliland's "Little Dead Sea." The surface of this lake, five miles long by four miles wide, lies nearly 500 feet below sea level. Its shores are encrusted with beaches of shining white salt. In the terrific heat of the depression natives gather salt and its production constitutes one of the major industries of the colony.

Jibuti Coveted by Italy

Italy wanted France to cede Jibuti to her at the time she entered the World War on the side of the Allies. France would not part with her valuable coaling station and door to Abyssinia even in those trying times. Instead she made Italy a concession on the Tripoli-Tunisia frontier. Jibuti is a town of white buildings, for the most part one-story structures. It numbers less than 10,000 inhabitants of which about 350 are Europeans, the remainder being a hodge-podge of Somali and other African natives, Armenians, Jews, Arabs and East Indians.

Bulletin No. 4, May 17, 1926.



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MAP OF NORTHEAST AFRICA

The strategic importance of French Somaliland is here clearly shown. It lies directly across the entrance of the Red Sea from Aden, which is the British Gibraltar on the east. French Somaliland alone taps the riches of Abyssinia by the means of the railroad from Addis Ababa to Jubuti. Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, both provinces of Italy, Rome now proposes to connect by means of a railroad.

Membership in The National Geographic Society

TEACHERS constantly inquire about membership in the National Geographic Society, and the procedure necessary to obtain the *National Geographic Magazine*, so highly valued in schools, and The Society's maps and panoramas which also go to members.

The National Geographic Society is an altruistic, non-commercial, educational institution, in which membership is acquired only through nomination by persons who already are members. The Society is supported entirely by the dues of its members, and these dues are devoted wholly to issuance of *The Geographic* and other publications which members receive, and to The Society's scientific expeditions and educational work, such as that represented by its GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS and Pictorial Geography sets.

A major problem of visual teaching is procuring adequate pictures. Thousands of teachers are finding the *National Geographic Magazine* indispensable for their personal use and an invaluable adjunct in classrooms because of its unique photographs, marvelous color series and its articles on Nature, industries, popular science, explorations and other phases of humanized geography.

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For your convenience a nomination blank, which members use in nominating their friends to the rich benefits of membership, is attached:

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